

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 1644 without my signature.

I support the work of county elder death review teams that are designed to assist in identifying and reviewing suspicious elder deaths. These multidisciplinary teams bring together experts from many departments including law enforcement, health care, adult protective services and the coroner's office.

In addition to this effort, county coroners are required to examine all cases where an unnatural death is suspected or where a physician has not been in attendance within the past 20 days. Current law also requires the majority of health care providers to be mandatory reporters of elder abuse or neglect. There is no evidence that the information currently provided to the elder death review teams is inadequate to assist in identifying and reviewing suspicious elder deaths.

I appreciate the author's commitment to reducing elder abuse and neglect and I share her concern that each suspicious death be fully investigated. However, the access to electronic death certification information will not enhance the deliberative process these teams employ.

For these reasons I am returning this bill without my signature.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger